

Dalton or Bird House
209 N. Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia

HABS No. VA-460

HABS
VA
7 ALEX
76-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington 25, D. C.

Dalton or Bird House
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Present Owner: Mrs. Herbert E. Marshburn

Present Occupant and Use: Apartments

Description:

Frame, now has false brick front of Greek Revival Derivation.

Number of Stories: 1 1/2

Historical Data:

Year of erection: Unknown

Built for (first owner): John Dalton

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Unknown

Notable events and occupants:

Stairwell, exhibits use of spindles superimposed on stairrail. This building is believed to have been the first home of John Dalton, early Alexandria merchant and trustee of the town. It is one of Alexandria's earliest residences, an informal regional type, reminiscent of the smaller houses of Williamsburg. Like the Ramsay and Fawcett Houses, the Dalton House recalls a period type which may have been widely employed contemporaneously, with what we call the typical and rigid Alexandria town house plan.

References: Gay Montague Moore, Seaport in Virginia, Richmond, 1949, Chapt., 3.
HABI form, prepared by T. Russell Jones and Worth Bailey, HABS
National Park Service, December, 1958.

Approved by

Dick Sutton
Chief Architect

Date

Feb. 16, 1959

John Dalton house
North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia

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The form of the house has been greatly changed in the last fifty years, the north end having been entirely rebuilt as a two story brick structure. It was a story and a half frame house with two rooms to a floor and a central etair and end chimneys. The front of the old section has been refaced with brick, and some detail of c. 1840-50 has been employed. The southern two thirds of the house remains largely intact behing. At present there is a broad entrance hall in the center of the west side, with a dropped floor, but the stairhall on the east is intact, with a small scale closed string stair ascending in two flights against the east and north walls. It has very tall turned balusters, with small vase turnings below long colonettes. The posts are square and are capped by the mouldings of the handrail. A curious feature of the upper run is that the balustrade has superimposed upon it the balustrade of the attic hall. This has a level handrail, the balusters being all of different lengths so as to fill the spandrel below. This forms a sort of screen of balusters.

In addition to a few fragmente of old door trim, there seems to be nothing of the original finish except areas of paneling in the southwest room. It would seem that this room once occupied the whole south side, but it has now been cut up as a tenement. It seems that the paneling of the west wall was refaced. However, the north and south walls retain the paneling and the east wall is paneled but with paneling brought from the east part of the room, now subdivided and largely devoid of old finish. The old paneling is of unusually interesting form. It hae broad panels in the dado and upper field of the walle, divided by a moulded chair rail, and each feature, such as the doors and windows are flanked by vaious fluted pilaster strips around which the cornice breaks. Unfortunately the mantel motif is gone and the paneling is much defaced and is in bad repair.

Thomas T. Waterman
1944

